


Bye-Law 5: Societies Council	
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<b>Approving Body</b>	Student Council/Board of Trustees
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# Bye Law 5 – Societies Council



## 1. Purpose

- a. The Societies Council exists to discuss and debate business appropriate to Societies. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - i. Providing a forum to support the development of Societies, their members; enabling societies to provide social, cultural, sustainability, educational and recreational activities

## 2. Membership

- a. The membership of the Societies Council shall be as follows:

### i. Full Members:

- a) All members of an affiliated Society are automatically a member of the Societies Council
- b) Any member of an affiliated society can attend meetings.  
NB: there is no limit to the number of members who can attend from individual societies

### ii. Chair

- a) The Chair of the Societies Council will be elected from among the Societies membership during Term 2 of each Academic Year (to act as Chair for the following year)
- b) Elections will take place as detailed in the relevant Bye Law.

### iii. Attending Members

- a) The elected Vice President Student Development
- b) Students' Union staff shall attend as requested by the meeting. A member of Union staff will act as clerk to the committee and ensure minutes are taken.

## 3. Powers

- a. The Societies Council will be able to:
  - i. Create and dismiss sub-committees as required
  - ii. Decide on the general policies of all affiliated Societies and debate their impact on Societies.
  - iii. Approve the overall allocation of funding to Societies as detailed in the Societies Constitution
  - iv. Receive and approve updates on additional allocation of funding

#### **4. Meetings**

- a. Societies Council will meet a minimum of 4 times per year.
- b. Meetings of Societies Council will take place on all campuses of the University through use of video-conferencing.

#### **5. Quorum**

- a. The quorum of Societies Council shall be a minimum of six (6) affiliated Societies represented. If quorum is not reached within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time, the meeting will still proceed but discussion of policy matters will be deferred to the next scheduled meeting.
- b. Any matter deferred from a previous meeting will be debated at the next meeting, even if this meeting does not reach quorum. Notification of any items deferred will be communicated to all members at least seven days prior to the meeting.

#### **6. Proceedings a. Convening Meetings**

- i. Dates, times and venues for all Society Council meetings will be communicated by email to all members of each affiliated Society at least two weeks in advance;
- ii. Meeting spaces will be provided on all campuses of the University;
- iii. Any changes to dates, times and venues, will be communicated no less than one week before the scheduled meeting date;
- iv. Policy submissions can be made at any time during the year and will go to the next available meeting of the Societies Council;
- v. In the event of an emergency or extraordinary meeting, the Chair shall ensure that as much notice as reasonably possible is given to the Council members.

#### **b. Emergency Meetings**

- i. An Emergency meeting can be called under the following circumstances;
  - a) The Chair must call an emergency meeting at the request of two affiliated Societies agreed by a vote from within each of the Societies NB: Minutes of the meeting where the vote took place must be submitted to the Chair.
  - b) The Chair must call an emergency meeting at the request of two members of the Societies Executive.

#### **c. Submitting Items of Business**

- i. Any affiliated Society member may submit items for discussion at meetings;
- ii. Items for discussion must be submitted to the Council using the form on the Societies section of the Student Union website which can be found at [www.uwsunion.org.uk](http://www.uwsunion.org.uk);
- iii. Societies Council will only discuss items which have been published on the Students' Union website for a minimum of two weeks.

**d. Agendas**

- i. An agenda will be produced for every meeting of the Societies Council;
- ii. Agendas and supporting papers will be distributed to all members of affiliated Societies a minimum of seven days before the meeting is scheduled to take place. In the case of an emergency meeting, agendas and papers will be circulated as early as possible.

**e. Debate Procedure**

- i. Any policy area shall be discussed in the following ways:
  - a) There will be an opening statement on the policy proposed. This statement will be made by the submitter of the policy or their nominee. In the event that the proposer is not present and has not nominated, the Chair may ask for a proposer from those in attendance
  - b) Thereafter there will be contributions for and against the policy area being debated.
  - c) The Chair shall ensure that the debate is balanced.
  - d) A vote will be taken at the end of the contributions.

**f. Voting & Decision Making**

- i. Each society gets one vote
- ii. Each society must nominate one member to cast their society's vote
- iii. Decisions are to be taken by simple majority (50% + 1) of those attending iv. In the event of a tie, the policy is deemed to have been rejected.
- v. Decisions will be binding only if Societies Council has reached its quorum.
- vi. Members will have the options to vote for, against or abstain.

**7. Chair's Powers**

- a. The Chair will have the power to:
  - i. Call the meeting to Order
  - ii. Set the agenda of Council and reorder the agenda if required.
  - iii. Set the timings of each agenda item
  - iv. Making rulings on whether or not submissions to Council are in order
  - v. Call indicative votes on procedure and debate process
  - vi. Request Clarifications from submitters
  - vii. Adjourn meetings of Council
  - viii. Call for a count of members present ix. In the event of disorder, request any person or persons creating a disturbance to leave the meeting.

## **8. Members' Rights**

- a. Members' rights detail what members can do within a meeting. If one of the rights are requested it shall take priority over all other business, except that Members may not raise a request for rights during a speech or during voting.
- b. Members should alert the Chair when they wish to exercise one of their rights in the meeting.
- c. The following are the rights of the members in the meeting;**
  - i. To ask that the meeting overturn a decision of the Chair;**
  - ii. To ask that the Chair be removed for the remainder of the meeting;**
    - a) If the meeting votes in favour, it will be treated as a vote of no confidence in the Chair
    - b) The Chair will vacate the chair of the Council for the remainder of the sitting
    - c) The meeting will then vote on a replacement chair for the remainder of the meeting which may, for the avoidance of doubt be the Vice President Student Development
  - iii. To ask that the vote be taken as a secret ballot;**
  - iv. To ask that the matter under discussion be put to an immediate vote**
  - v. To ask that the vote be deferred to a future meeting**
  - vi. To ask for a count of affiliated Societies present (quorum check)**